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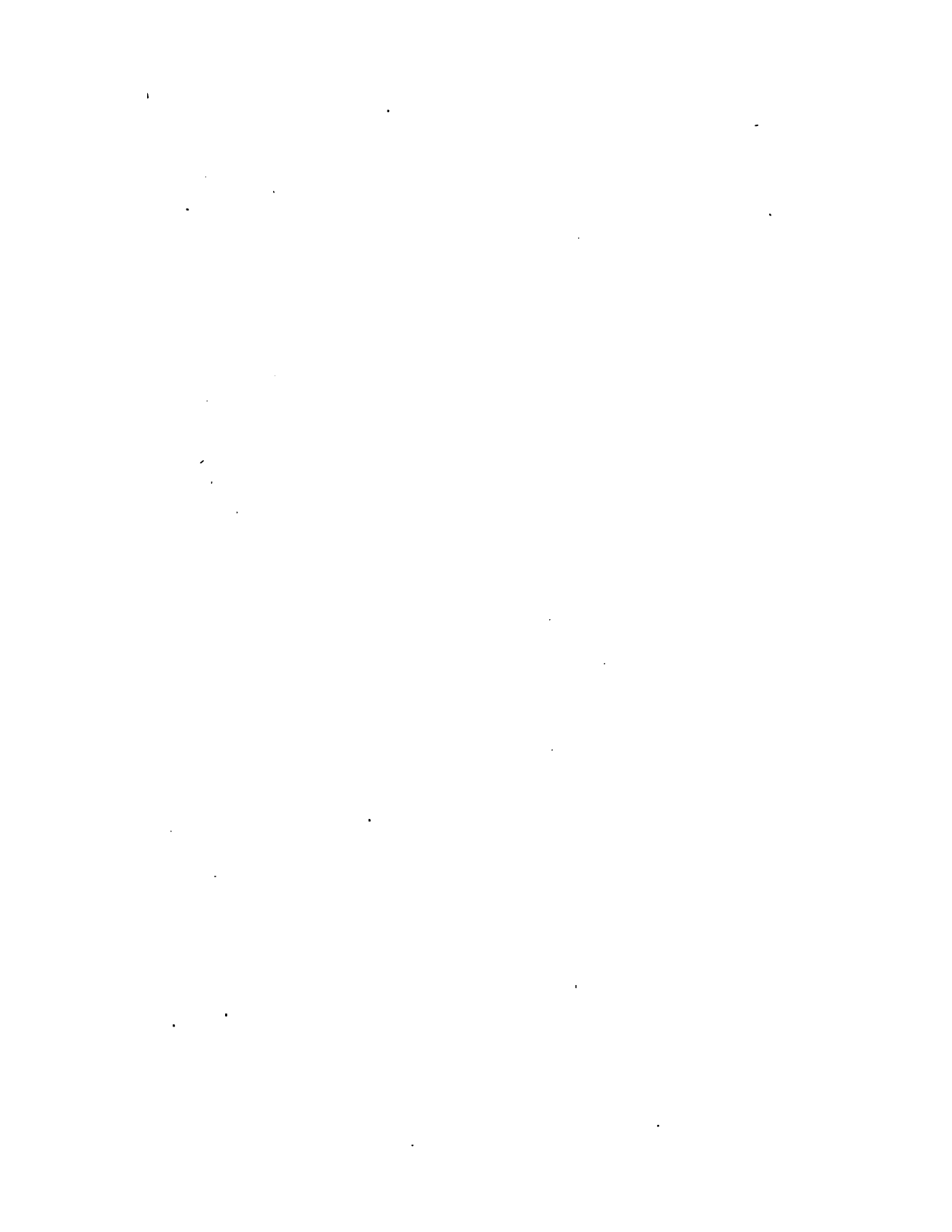




Presented to the University  
of Oxford  
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*Presented 1827.*

# DECLARATION

OF THE

## CATHOLIC BISHOPS,

THE

**Vicars Apostolic and their Coadjutors**

IN

GREAT BRITAIN.



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LONDON:

KEATING AND BROWN, DUKE STREET, GROSVENOR  
SQUARE, AND PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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## P R E A M B L E.

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WHEN we consider the misrepresentations of the Catholic religion, which are so industriously and widely propagated in this country, we are filled with astonishment. But our astonishment subsides, when we call to mind, that the character of Christ himself was misrepresented :—he was charged with blasphemy, with breaking the sabbath, and with forbidding tribute to be paid to Cæsar\* :—that the apostles and disciples of Christ were misrepresented,—they were charged with speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God, with exciting sedition, and with many other grievous offences entirely devoid of proof†, and that misrepresentation was the general lot of Christians, in the first ages of the church. The primitive Christians were

\* Matt., xxvi. 65. Mark, iii. 22. John, ix. 16.—Luke, xxiii. 2.

† Acts, vi. 11.—xxiv. 5.—xxv. 7.

first calumniated and held up to public contempt, and then persecuted and deprived, not only of their civil rights and privileges, but of their property, and even of their very lives. They were charged with idolatry, with horrid cruelties, and other flagitious crimes, even in their religious worship. In a word, their whole religion was described as a system of folly and superstition, grounded on no one rational principle.

St. Justin and Tertullian, in their apologies for the Christian religion, endeavoured to dispel these misrepresentations, by exhibiting the real doctrines and precepts, and explaining some of the sacred rites, of the Christian religion. They showed that these injurious misrepresentations were, in many instances, the inventions of men, who, unable to withstand the evidences of the divine establishment of Christianity, endeavoured to excite prejudices against it in the minds of the people, by holding out its doctrines as absurd and impious, and its professors as the causes of every public calamity.

St. Augustin complained of the calumnies which were circulated against the Catholic church, by the Manicheans and Donatists in his age. He humbly confessed and lamented, that he himself had employed the same weapons

against the church, when he was attached to the former of these sects,\* and acknowledged that he then blindly, and rashly, and falsely accused the Catholic church of doctrines and opinions, which he was at length convinced she never taught, believed, or held.

The Catholics of Great Britain have to lament and to complain that the doctrines and religious rites which, as Catholics, they are taught by their church to believe and observe, have been long grossly misconceived and misrepresented in this country, to the great injury of their religious character and temporal interests.

They are persuaded that many, who are opposed to them on account of their religion, suppose, without inquiry, that the Catholic church really teaches all that she is reported by her adversaries to teach ; and imagine that she is responsible for every absurd opinion entertained, and for every act of superstition performed, by every individual who bears the name of Catholic.

We hope that all who are animated with a love of truth, and with sentiments of Christian charity, will be disposed willingly to listen to the sincere declarations of their Catholic fellow-

\* Gaudens erubui ; non me tot annos adversus Catholicam fidem, sed contra carnalium cogitationum figmenta latrasse.



countrymen, and will never impute to their religion, principles or practices which, as Catholics, they do not hold or observe, and which their church condemns as errors or abuses.

In this hope and persuasion, the British Catholics have made repeated declarations of their religious doctrines, and have shewn—they trust to the satisfaction of all who have paid attention to them—that they hold no religious principles, and entertain no opinions flowing from those principles, that are not perfectly consistent with the sacred duties which, as Christians, they owe to Almighty God ; with all the civil duties which, as subjects, they owe to their sovereign and the constituted civil government of their country ; and with all the social duties, which, as citizens, they owe to their fellow subjects, whatever may be their religious creed.

They had flattered themselves, that the numerous and uniform expositions of their religious doctrines, given in public professions of the Catholic faith, in Catholic catechisms, in various authentic documents, and in declarations confirmed by their solemn oaths, would have abundantly sufficed to correct all misrepresentations of their real tenets.

But they have to regret, that some grievous misconceptions, regarding certain points of



Catholic doctrine, are unhappily still found to exist in the minds of many, whose good opinion they value, and whose good-will they wish to conciliate. To their grief they hear, that, notwithstanding all their declarations to the contrary, they are still exhibited to the public as men, holding the most erroneous, unscriptural, and unreasonable doctrines—grounding their faith on human authority, and not on the word of God—as enemies to the circulation and to the reading of the Holy Scriptures—as guilty of idolatry in the sacrifice of the mass, in the adoration, as it is called, of the Virgin Mary, and in the worship of the saints, and of the images of Christ and of the saints ; and as guilty of superstition in invoking the saints, and in praying for the souls in purgatory ;—as usurping a divine power of forgiving sins, and imposing the yoke of confession on the people—as giving leave to commit sin by indulgences—as despising the obligation of an oath—as dividing their allegiance between their king and the pope—as claiming the property of the church establishment—as holding the uncharitable doctrine of exclusive salvation, and as maintaining that faith is not to be kept with heretics.

We are at a loss to conceive, why the holding of certain religious doctrines, which have no connexion with civil or social duties, whether

those doctrines are taken in the sense in which they are misconstrued by others, or in the sense in which they are uniformly understood by Catholics, should be made a subject of crimination against British Catholics, by those who assume to themselves liberty of thinking what they please, in matters of religious belief. It is difficult to understand, why doctrines purely religious, in no wise affecting the duties which Catholics owe to their sovereign or to civil society, should be brought forward at all, when the question relates only to the civil rights and privileges, which they claim as British subjects. It is much to be wished that those who declaim against what they call the errors and superstitions of popery, would first learn from Catholics themselves, by inquiry, what their real doctrines are, on the points above alluded to, and in what sense Catholics understand the terms by which their doctrines are expressed. They would perhaps find that they have been hitherto contending, not against the Catholic faith, but against the fictions of their own imaginations, or against their own misconstructions of the language of the Catholic Church.

Though we might refer to former expositions of the faith of Catholics, which we deem amply sufficient to correct the misconceptions,

and to refute the misrepresentations of our doctrines ; yet, it having been stated to us, that by publishing, at the present time, a plain and correct declaration of our real tenets, on those points which are still so much misrepresented, or misconceived, a better understanding may be established among his Majesty's subjects, and the advancement of religion and charity may be effected ; hence, we, the undersigned Catholic Bishops, the Vicars Apostolic and their Coadjutors in Great Britain, have thought it our duty to publish the following declaration, in the hope, that it will be received by all who read it, with the same love of truth, and the same good-will, with which it is given.



## SECTION I.

*On the General Character of the Doctrines of Faith professed by the Catholic Church.*

THE doctrines of the Catholic Church are often characterized as *erroneous, unscriptural, and unreasonable*.

All those doctrines, and only those doctrines, are articles of Catholic faith, which are revealed by Almighty God.

Whatsoever is revealed by God, who knows all things as they are in themselves, and who cannot deceive us, by teaching falsehood for truth, is most true and certain ; though it may entirely surpass the comprehension of created minds.

On the authority of divine revelation, the Catholic believes, as doctrines of faith, that in one God there are three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; that Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the salvation of all mankind, is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true Man ; that there is no remission of sin, nor salvation but through him ; that the sacraments of bap-

tism and penance are divinely-appointed means for the remission of sin ; that in the mass, a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice is offered to God for the living and the dead ; that the souls detained in purgatory are helped by the suffrages of the faithful ; that the saints reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invoked ; that at the last day our bodies will be raised from death, and that Christ will come to judge all men according to their works ; that eternal happiness will be the reward of the good, and eternal misery the punishment of the wicked.

If these, and other doctrines of Catholic faith, are really revealed by Almighty God, they are not erroneous, but most true and certain—they are not unscriptural, but agreeable to the true sense of the written word of God—the belief of them is not unreasonable, because it is reasonable to believe whatever is true, and taught by the God of truth.

The Catholic is fully persuaded that all the articles of his faith are really revealed by Almighty God.

Is he not at liberty to think so, as well as others are to think the contrary ; and in this empire especially, where liberty of thought is so loudly proclaimed and lauded ? Is it reasonable or charitable to condemn him for thinking so, when he may have good and solid



grounds for his conviction, and may feel that his eternal salvation depends on his firm belief of all the doctrines which Christ has taught?

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## SECTION II.

*On the grounds of the certitude which a Catholic has, that all the Doctrines which he believes, as articles of Catholic Faith, are really revealed by Almighty God.*

CATHOLICS are often charged with grounding their faith *on mere human authority, and not on the word of God.*

Catholics deny this, because they are convinced, that their faith is grounded on the word of God, proposed to them by the authority of that ministry, which Christ established, and appointed to teach his revealed doctrines to all nations.

The Catholic believes all those doctrines, which God has revealed.

The question, *what* are those doctrines, which God has revealed, is a question of FACT. It appears reasonable that the existence of a *fact* should be ascertained by the evidence of *testimony*.

The body of the doctrines, precepts, and institutions, which were delivered by Christ to his apostles, constitutes the new or the Chris-

tian law ; as the body of the doctrines, precepts, and institutions, which were delivered by the Almighty to Moses, constituted the old law.

The true and certain knowledge of what is commanded by any law, is generally communicated and obtained by the authoritative *promulgation* of the law.

By the ordinance of God, the doctrines and precepts of the old law were made known to the Israelites and Jewish people, by Moses, and the priests in succession, till the end of the law.

By the ordinance of God, the doctrines and precepts of the new law were to be made known to all nations, in all ages, by the apostles and their successors, to the consummation of the world.

On the spiritual authority of the apostles and their successors, who were divinely commissioned to promulgate and teach the law of Christ to all nations ; and on the uniform and universal testimony, belief, and practice of all Christian Churches from the beginning, the certitude of the Catholic is grounded, that all the doctrines which he believes, as articles of Catholic Faith, and all the sacred precepts and rites, which he observes, as the ordinances of Christ, were really revealed and instituted by Almighty God ; and are the same, as were originally delivered by

Christ to his apostles, and by them promulgated over all nations.

The Catholic is fully satisfied, that this method which he follows, for ascertaining *what* are the revealed doctrines of divine faith, is the right rule, and that it leads him to the unity of truth.

Is he not at liberty to follow a rule which gives such satisfaction and security to his mind ?

Is it fair for others who, by following a different rule, are led into a countless variety of contradictory doctrines on matters of Christian belief, to disturb the tranquillity of the Catholic on this head, or to condemn him, for his submission to the authority of a ministry, which he is convinced was established by Christ for the purpose of bringing all nations to the certain knowledge of his law, and to the unity of faith ? Is not this rule perfectly natural and reasonable ? Can any human legislator condemn the principle and rule of the Catholic in this regard ?

### SECTION III.

#### *On the Holy Scriptures.*

IN England the Catholic church is held out as an enemy to the reading and circulating of the Holy Scriptures.

Whereas the Catholic church venerates the



Holy Scriptures as the written part of the word of God ; she has in all ages been the faithful guardian of this sacred deposit ; she has ever laboured to preserve the integrity of these inspired writings, and the true sense, in which they have been universally understood, at all times from the Apostolic age.

The Catholic Church has never forbidden or discouraged the reading or the circulation of authentic copies of the sacred Scriptures, in the original languages. She binds her Clergy to the daily recital of a canonical office, which comprizes a large portion of the sacred volume, and to read and expound to the faithful, in the vernacular tongue, on Sundays, the epistle or gospel of the day, or some other portion of the divine law.

As to translations of the Holy Scriptures into modern languages, the Catholic Church requires that none should be put into the hands of the faithful but such as are acknowledged by ecclesiastical authority to be accurate, and conformable to the sense of the originals. There never was a general law of the Catholic Church prohibiting the reading of authorized translations of the Scriptures ; but, considering that many, by their ignorance and evil dispositions, have perverted the meaning of the sacred text to their own destruction, the Catholic Church

has thought it prudent to make a regulation, that the faithful should be guided in this matter by the advice of their respective Pastors.

Whether the Holy Scriptures, which ought never to be taken in hand but with respect, should be made a class-book for children, is a matter of religious and prudential consideration; on which the Pastors of the Catholic Church have a right to decide with regard to their own flocks; and we hold that in this matter none have a right to dictate to them.

The Catholics in England, of mature years, have permission to read authentic and approved translations of the Holy Scriptures, with explanatory notes; and are exhorted to read them in the spirit of piety, humility, and obedience.

Pope Pius VII., in a Rescript dated April 18, 1820, and addressed to the Vicars Apostolic in England, earnestly exhorts them to confirm the people committed to their spiritual care, in faith and good works; and for that end, to encourage them to read books of pious instruction, and particularly the Holy Scriptures, in translations approved by ecclesiastical authority; because, to those who are well disposed, nothing can be more useful, more consoling, or more animating than the reading of the sacred Scriptures, understood in their true sense—they serve to



confirm the faith, to support the hope, and to inflame the charity of the true Christian.

But when the reading and the circulation of the Scriptures are urged and recommended as the entire rule of faith, as the sole means by which men are to be brought to the certain and specific knowledge of the doctrines, precepts, and institutions of Christ ; and when the Scriptures so read and circulated are left to the interpretation and private judgment of each individual ; then such reading, circulation, and interpretation, are forbidden by the Catholic Church, because the Catholic Church knows, that the circulation of the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them by each one's private judgment, was not the means ordained by Christ for the communication of the true knowledge of his law to all nations—she knows that Christianity was established in many countries before one book of the New Testament was written—that it was not by means of the Scriptures, that the Apostles and their successors converted nations, or any one nation to the unity of the Christian faith—that the unauthorized reading and circulation of the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them by private judgment, are calculated to lead men to contradictory doctrines on the primary articles of Christian belief ; to inconsistent forms of worship, which cannot all be constituent parts of the uniform

and sublime system of Christianity ; to errors and fanaticism in religion, and to seditions and the greatest disorders in states and kingdoms.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### *On the Charge of Idolatry and Superstition.*

IGNORANCE or malice have gone so far as to charge the Catholic Church with IDOLATRY, *in the sacrifice of the Mass—in the adoration (as it is called) of the Virgin Mary, and in the worship of the Saints, and of the images of Christ and of the Saints ;* and with SUPERSTITION, *in invoking the Saints, and in praying for souls in purgatory.* Now idolatry consists in giving to any creature that supreme adoration, honour, or worship, which is due only to Almighty God.

The Catholic Church teaches that idolatry is one of the greatest crimes that can be committed against the majesty of God ; and every true member of this church shudders at the idea of such a crime, and feels grievously injured by so horrid an imputation.

But it is said that Catholics adore the elements of bread and wine in the Mass ; that they adore the Virgin Mary ; that they adore the cross ; and that they worship the saints and the images of Christ and of the Saints. Before we repel these horrid imputations, in the sense in



which they are made, we must explain the different meanings of the words *adoration*, *honour*, and *worship*, that the calumnious charge, and its denial, may be understood in the same explained sense.

We find that in the language of the sacred Scripture, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin\*, as well as in the language of the ancient liturgies of the Christian church, these words, *adoration*, *honour*, and *worship*, are ambiguous terms, and are used in different senses; according to the nature of the object to which the act, implied by the term, is directed, and according to the intention of him, who performs the act. Hence we find them used as relating, sometimes to God, and sometimes to creatures. Although, in modern times, the exclusive idea of that supreme homage, which is due only to God, is attached by some to the words *adoration* and *worship*; yet these words may still be retained by others, in a different meaning, without affording the remotest cause for the imputation of idolatry. In this different meaning they are still retained, in the unchanged language of the ancient liturgies used in the Catholic Church.

\* See in Hebrew (Prov. iii. 9, and Exod. xx. 12), (Deut. xxviii. 47 and 48), (Ps. xcvi. 9, and 1, alias 3d Kings i. 23). In Greek, Gen. xxiv. 26, and Gen. xlix. 8. In Latin Adorare, Ps. xxviii. 2, and Gen. xxiii. 7, and 4th alias 2 Kings ii. 15.

The words *adoration* and *worship* are equally referred, sometimes to God, and sometimes to creatures, as is the word *honour*. Now because we are commanded in scripture to *honour* God, and to *honour* the king; and children are commanded to *honour* their parents: it does not follow that the honour due to the king, or to parents, is the same as that which we owe to God. To God we owe supreme and sovereign honour, such as it would be a crime to pay to any creature. To the king, we owe the highest civil honour. To parents, children owe the honour of filial respect and obedience. How unjust would it be to say, that because a subject honours his king, he pays him that supreme and sovereign honour which is due only to God! The same is to be said of the terms *adoration* and *worship*, as used in former times, and sometimes used at present in the language of the Catholic church. To *adore*, even according to modern usage, often means no more than to express extreme affection or respect. To *worship* (in the translation of the Bible, published at Oxford) is therein used to signify inferior as well as supreme worship. In the first book of Chronicles, xxix. 20. we read in that edition, that the assembly *bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord (Jehovah) and the king*. Did they worship the king, with the same



supreme worship which they paid to God? Certainly not. When a man says to the woman he takes to wife, "with my body I thee worship," can this be called idolatry? Surely nothing can be more unfair than arguments drawn from ambiguous terms, construed in a sense disavowed by those, against whom the arguments are employed.

We answer therefore, that if by the terms *adoration*, *honour* and *worship*, be understood that *supreme* adoration, honour and worship, which is due only to God; Catholics do not adore, nor honour, nor worship any other, than the one, only, true, and living God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe: they do not, in this sense, adore, nor honour, nor worship the Virgin Mary, nor any of the Saints, nor the cross, nor images, nor any other creature whatsoever.

In the Mass, Catholics do offer supreme adoration, not to the elements of bread and wine, which they hold not to be present after the consecration; but to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom they believe to be truly, really and substantially present, under the appearances only of bread and wine, after the consecration, and change thereby of the elements into his body and blood. To adore Christ, by an act of supreme adoration, is no idolatry;



because he is truly God, and consequently a legitimate object of supreme worship.

But if Catholics, using the ancient language of the Christian church, are said,

1st. To *worship* the saints; this worship must be understood to be only an *inferior* worship, honour, and respect, paid to them proportionate to the limited perfections and excellences which God has bestowed upon them; but this worship is infinitely below that supreme worship which they pay to God. Catholics acknowledge no perfection or excellence in any Saint, not even in the Blessed Virgin Mary, which they do not profess to be the work and gift of God in them. So that in honouring the Saints, they celebrate the works of God, and consequently give glory to him. Whatever act of religious veneration we pay to the Saints, is ultimately referred to God.

2nd. To *adore* the cross: this word, if applied to the cross itself, means no more than an inferior and relative respect paid to the instrument of our redemption; but if in view of the Cross it be applied to Christ himself, then it means, as it ought to mean, an act of supreme adoration.

3d. To *worship* the images of Christ or of the Saints: the word is here again understood by Catholics only of an *inferior* and relative respect shewn to images, in consideration of the respect due to the objects which

they represent, and to which the respect, shewn to the images is referred. In this sense respect is shewn to the statue or to the throne of the King, in consideration of the majesty of the personage to whom they relate. An insult offered to his statue would be considered as intended to be offered to the king himself. In this sense a son respects the image or picture of his parent; a parent that of his child; a friend that of his friend; not for any intrinsic virtue in the material substance or work of art, but because it relates to, and brings to his mind, the object of his respect and affection.

To condemn this relative regard for images, or pictures, would be to condemn the very feelings of nature. To charge the Catholic with idolatry, because the term *worship*, meaning only an *inferior* and *relative* regard, is found in the ancient and modern liturgies of his church, is not consistent with candour or charity.

The charge, that the Catholic church sanctions the praying to images, is a calumny, and carries with it an imputation of stupidity too gross to be noticed. Catholics sometimes pray BEFORE images, because they serve to collect their thoughts, and fix their attention in their meditations and prayers; but they are not, on that account, to be supposed to be so void of reason and sense as to pray to the image: for they know that in it there is no virtue or



power; and that it can neither see, nor hear, nor help them.

Catholics do solicit the intercession of the angels and saints reigning with Christ in heaven. But in this, when done according to the principles and spirit of the Catholic church, there is nothing of superstition, nothing which is not consistent with true piety. For the Catholic church teaches her children not to pray to the saints, as to the authors or givers of divine grace; but only to solicit the saints in heaven to pray for them, in the same sense as St. Paul desired the faithful on earth to pray for him.

Catholics, according to the faith and pious practice of the Christian church from the age of the Apostles, do pray for the release and eternal rest of departed souls, who may be detained for a time in a state of punishment on account of their sins, but in this we cannot discover even the shadow of superstition.

By invoking the intercession of the Saints in heaven, and by praying for the suffering souls in purgatory, Catholics exercise acts of that communion of charity, which subsists between the members of the mystical body of Christ: the principle of which communion they profess to believe, when they say, "I believe the holy Catholic church, *the communion of Saints.*"

After this explanation and declaration, we hope that our countrymen will never be so unjust or so uncharitable, as to charge Catholics with idolatry or superstition, nor be so illiberal as to attempt to give a colour to these injurious charges, by fixing an exclusive meaning to terms, which, in the language of Scripture, Christian antiquity, and common usage, bear different senses, in different circumstances.

#### SECTION V.

*On the power of forgiving Sins, and the precept of Confession.*

THE Catholic church is charged with impiety, in usurping the power of forgiving sins, and with spiritual tyranny, in imposing on the people the yoke of confession.

The Catholic church cannot be charged with impiety, for exercising powers given by Christ to his Apostles and to their lawful successors; nor with tyranny, in enforcing the observance of the precept of Christ.

Catholics believe that Christ granted to his Apostles, and to the Priests of his Church, power to forgive sins, by the administration of the sacraments of baptism, and penance, to those who are duly disposed to receive this grace. They believe that the sacrament of penance is an institution of Christ, no less than the sacrament



of baptism. The belief of both rests on the same foundation.

In both these sacraments, sin is forgiven by the ministry of man. *Be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, Acts, ii, 38; whose sins YOU SHALL FORGIVE, they are forgiven, John, xx, 23.* But no actual sin can be forgiven at the mere will of any Pope, or any priest, or any person whomsoever, without a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and a firm resolution to avoid future guilt, and to atone for past transgressions. Any person who receives absolution without these necessary dispositions, far from obtaining the remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt of hypocrisy and profanation.

The obligation of sacramental confession to a priest is not an imposition of the church, but a precept of Christ. Without the voluntary confession of the penitent, the power of forgiving, or retaining sins, could not be exercised, with discretion and judgment, by the minister of the sacrament of penance. The confession of sins could never have been introduced, had it not been received from the beginning as a divine ordinance for the remission of sin. It has been practised from the earliest ages of Christianity. It is attended with the most salutary effects. Besides being a means of obtaining the remission of sin; it affords relief to the troubled conscience, and opportunities of reclaiming de-

luded sinners from mischievous projects, and of causing reparation to be made for injuries done to persons, property, or character. It may be ridiculed by such as *blaspheme those things which they know not* (2 Pet. ii, 12), but will be ever cherished as a merciful and salutary institution, by those who are sincerely sorry for their sins, and earnestly sue for pardon.

## SECTION VI.

### *On Indulgences.*

THE Catholic Church is charged with encouraging guilt, by *giving leave to commit sin, and granting an anticipated pardon for sins to come by indulgences.*

The Catholic church rejects with abhorrence the imputation, that by granting an indulgence, she grants permission to commit sin, or a pardon for sins to come. An indulgence, in the sense of the Catholic church, is no pardon for sin at all; it is only a remission of the whole, or of a part of the temporal punishment, which the justice of God often reserves to be undergone by the sinner, after the guilt of the sin has been remitted. The power of granting the remission of this temporal punishment was given by Christ to St. Peter and his successors, and has been exercised from the earliest ages.



An indulgence, so far from exempting sinners from works of penance and piety, is an encouragement to the performance of such works, since they are prescribed as conditions for gaining the benefit of an indulgence.

Surely, therefore, the doctrine of the Catholic church concerning the sacrament of penance, confession and indulgences, does not tend to relax christian morality, nor to encourage guilt, nor facilitate the commission of crime, but rather to put an end to sin, and to promote the exercise of every Christian virtue amongst men.

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## SECTION VII.

### *On the Obligation of an Oath.*

CATHOLICS are charged with holding that *they are not bound by any oath, and that the Pope can dispense them from all the oaths they may have taken.*

We cannot sufficiently express our astonishment at such a charge. We hold that the obligation of an oath is most sacred : for by an oath man calls the Almighty searcher of hearts to witness the sincerity of his conviction of the truth of what he asserts ; and his fidelity, in performing the engagement he makes. Hence, whosoever swears falsely, or violates the lawful engagement he has confirmed by an

oath, not only offends against truth, or justice, but against religion. He is guilty of the enormous crime of perjury.

No power in any Pope, or council, or in any individual or body of men, invested with authority in the Catholic church, can make it lawful for a Catholic to confirm any falsehood by an oath; or dispense with any oath, by which a Catholic has confirmed his duty of allegiance to his sovereign, or any obligation of duty or justice to a third person. He who takes an oath is bound to observe it, in the obvious meaning of the words, or in the known meaning of the person to whom it is sworn.

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### SECTION VIII.

*On allegiance to our Sovereign and obedience to the Pope.*

CATHOLICS are charged with *dividing their allegiance between their temporal sovereign and the Pope.*

Allegiance relates not to spiritual but to *civil* duties; to those temporal tributes and obligations, which the subject owes to the person of his sovereign, and to the authority of the state.

By the term *spiritual*, we here mean that, which in its nature tends *directly* to a *supernatural* end, or is ordained to produce a *super-*



*natural* effect. Thus the office of teaching the doctrines of faith, the administration of the sacraments, the conferring and exercising of jurisdiction purely ecclesiastical, are *spiritual* matters.

By the term *temporal*, we mean that which in its nature tends directly to the end of *civil* society. Thus the right of making laws for the civil government of the state, the administration of civil justice, the appointment of civil magistrates and military officers, are *temporal* matters.

The allegiance which Catholics hold to be due and are bound to pay to their sovereign, and to the civil authority of the state, is perfect and undivided. They do not divide their allegiance between their sovereign and any other power on earth, whether temporal or ecclesiastical. They acknowledge in the sovereign, and in the constituted government of these realms, a supreme civil and temporal authority, which is entirely distinct from, and totally independent of the spiritual and ecclesiastical authority of the Pope and of the Catholic church. They declare that neither the Pope nor any other prelate or ecclesiastical person of the Roman Catholic church, has, in virtue of his spiritual or ecclesiastical character, any right, directly or indirectly, to any civil or temporal jurisdiction,

power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, within this realm; nor has any right to interfere, directly or indirectly, in the civil government of the United Kingdom, or any part thereof; nor to oppose, in any manner, the performance of the civil duties which are due to his Majesty, his heirs and successors, from all or any of his Majesty's subjects; nor to enforce the performance of any *spiritual* or *ecclesiastical* duty, by any *civil* or *temporal* means. They hold themselves bound in conscience to obey the civil government of this realm, in all things of a temporal and civil nature, notwithstanding any dispensation or order to the contrary had, or to be had, from the Pope or any authority of the church of Rome.

Hence we declare, that by rendering obedience in *spiritual* matters to the Pope, Catholics do not withhold any portion of their allegiance to their King, and that their allegiance is entire and undivided; the *civil* power of the state, and the *spiritual* authority of the Catholic church, being absolutely distinct, and being never intended by their Divine Author to interfere or clash with each other.

"Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

## SECTION IX.

*On the claim of British Catholics to the property of the Church establishment in England.*

BRITISH Catholics are charged with entertaining a pretended right to the property of the established church in England.

We consider such a charge to be totally without foundation. We declare that we entertain no pretension to such a claim. We regard all the revenues and temporalities of the church establishment, as the property of those on whom they are settled by the laws of the land. We disclaim any right, title, or pretension, with regard to the same.

## SECTION X.

*On the doctrine of Exclusive Salvation.*

CATHOLICS are charged with *uncharitableness, in holding the doctrine of exclusive salvation.*

Catholics are taught by their church to love all men, without exception ; to wish that all may be saved ; and to pray that all may be saved, and may come to the knowledge of the truth, by which they may be saved.

If the Almighty himself has assigned certain conditions, without the observance of which man cannot be saved, it would seem to be an



act of impiety to attempt to annul those divinely-established conditions: and an act of great uncharitableness towards a fellow-man, to tell him, that he may be saved, without complying with the conditions prescribed by the Almighty.

The doctrinal principle of exclusive salvation belongs to the law of Christ.

Has not Christ, who commands the belief of his revealed doctrines, pronounced, that he that *believeth not, shall be condemned?* (Mark xvi, 16.) Has not Christ, who instituted baptism for the remission of sins, declared that *except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?* (John iii. 5.) Has not St. Paul enumerated a list of crimes, such as adultery, idolatry, hatred, seditions, heresies, murders, drunkenness, &c. of which he declares that *they, who do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God?* (Galat. v, 21.) Are not these exclusive conditions?

Whoever professes the law of Christ must profess the *principle* and doctrine of exclusive salvation. It is not the Catholic, it is God himself who will exclude from Heaven those who are not duly qualified for it by faith and good works.

But the Catholic, whilst he is bound to admit, and with firm faith to believe, this doctrinal *principle*, is bound also by the divine command-



ment not to judge. He is not allowed therefore to pronounce sentence of condemnation on individuals, who may live and die out of the external communion of the Catholic church ; nor to pronounce sentence of condemnation against those who may die in an apparent state of sin. All those he leaves to the righteous judgment of the great searcher of hearts, who at the last day will render to every man according to his works.

But surely charity, as well as truth, must forbid one Christian to deceive another, in a matter of such infinite importance as the eternal salvation of his soul. He who should persuade his neighbour, that no condition for salvation is required on the part of man, would deceive him. He who admits that any one such condition is required by the Almighty, admits the *principle* of exclusive salvation.

## SECTION XI.

### *On keeping Faith with Heretics.*

CATHOLICS are charged with holding the principle *that they are not bound to keep faith with heretics.*

As Catholics, we hold and we declare, that all Catholics are bound by the law of nature, and by the law of revealed religion, to observe the duties of fidelity and justice to all men,

without any exception of persons, and without any distinction of nation or religion.

British Catholics have solemnly sworn, that "they reject and detest that unchristian and impious principle, that faith is not to be kept with heretics or infidels."

After this, the imputation of their holding this principle, cannot but be felt by them as grievously injurious to their religious and moral character.

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### CONCLUSION.

HAVING, in the foregoing declaration, endeavoured to state, in the simplicity of truth, such doctrines of our church as are most frequently misrepresented or misunderstood in this country, and to explain the meaning in which Catholics understand the terms by which these doctrines are expressed in the language of their church; we confidently trust, that this declaration and explanation will be received by all our fellow-subjects, in a spirit of candour and charity; and that those who have been hitherto ignorant of, or but imperfectly acquainted with our doctrines of faith, will do us the justice to acknowledge, that, as Catholics, we hold no religious principles, and entertain

no opinions flowing from those principles, which are not perfectly consistent with our duties as Christians, and as British subjects.

This declaration we, the undersigned, approve, and publish, as an exposition of our principles and doctrines, on the subjects to which it refers.

- ✝ WILLIAM, *Bishop of Halia, Vic. Apost. in the London District.*
- ✝ PETER BERNARDIN, *Bishop of Thespiæ, Vic. Apost. in the Western District.*
- ✝ THOMAS, *Bishop of Bolina, Vic. Apost. in the Northern District.*
- ✝ THOMAS, *Bishop of Cambyropolis, Vic. Apost. in the Midland District.*
- ✝ ALEXANDER, *Bishop of Maximianopolis, Vic. Apost. in the Lowland District in Scotland.*
- ✝ RONALD, *Bishop of Aeryndela, Vic. Apost. in the Highland District in Scotland.*
- ✝ PETER AUGUSTINE, *Bishop of Siga, Coadjutor in the Western District.*
- ✝ JAMES, *Bishop of Usula, Coadjutor in the London District.*
- ✝ THOMAS, *Bishop of Europum, Coadjutor in the Northern District.*
- ✝ ALEXANDER, *Bishop of Cybistra, Coadjutor in the Lowland District in Scotland.*

*May 1826*



*Lond. 1826.*

**AN ADDRESS**  
**FROM THE**  
**British Roman Catholics**  
**TO THEIR**  
**PROTESTANT FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.**

**FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,**

WE present to you a Declaration, drawn up and signed by those Ecclesiastics who, in this country, are the expounders of our Faith, we beg earnestly to call your attention to this document, which distinctly repudiates the obnoxious tenets imputed to us. The Irish Bishops have given a Declaration of Catholic Principles, similar in effect to this. We ask you, can you believe that we are joined in a perfidious league to deceive you? Are those amongst us who are linked with you by social habits and friendly intercourse; those, in whom you confidently trust in matters of high importance; and from whom you meet, in return, with integrity and fair-dealing, to be considered honest on every other occasion, and capable of deep designing fraud and duplicity on this?

To our sense of the sacred obligation of an

oath, (1) we daily sacrifice every object of ordinary ambition; is it in human nature that we can become perjured men in this solitary instance? We are accused of idolatry—we disclaim the imputation (2); of not keeping faith with heretics—we disclaim the imputation (3); of dividing the allegiance which is due to the King—we disclaim the imputation (4); of acknowledging in the Pope a deposing power—we disclaim the imputation (5); of believing that a priest can absolve from sin at his mere will and pleasure—we disclaim the imputation (6). Each and all of these opinions we most solemnly and most unequivocally disclaim.

Our religion is called a persecuting religion. We reply, that the Catholic religion, and the policy of Catholic states, are unfairly confounded; and if the ministers of the Catholic religion have, at any time, co-operated with the civil government, in measures of persecution, they forgot the divine precepts of their Founder, in attempting to prevent the introduction of sects by violence and injustice; and we condemn the deed. Are we to suffer for their misconduct? In the unholy race of persecution, which has been run by various denominations of Christians at other

(1) See the Declaration of the Catholic Bishops in Great Britain, sect. 7.

(2) Ibid. sect. 4.

(3) Ibid. sect. 11.

(4) Ibid. sect. 8.

(5) Ibid. sect. 8.

(6) Ibid. sect. 5.



times, in this or any other country, if members of the religion we profess were not exempt from blame, we deeply deplore their blind infatuation. Why, then, are we to be punished for excesses in which we bore no part; which we as cordially condemn as you do; and for which *your* ancestors are not less liable to reproach than *ours*? If the professors of the Catholic faith were even *peculiarly* distinguished, in times long past, for their mistaken zeal (which we do not concede), the more deeply should we lament their errors; but let not the liberal Protestant, and the enlightened Catholic of the present day, allow themselves to be hurried, by prejudiced or interested men, into hatred of each other, and thus perpetuate dissension and religious bigotry, in the name of the God of charity and peace. We challenge calm inquiry into the practice of the present governments of Christendom, and we believe it will be found, on candid examination, that the principles of religious liberty are fully as well practised in Catholic, as in Protestant States.

We entreat you deeply to consider the effects of the example of the legislation of this country, on the various nations of the world. Above all, weigh well its consequences on the rising States of South America. We beg of you to keep constantly in view, what power of argument the continuance of these laws of exclusion, affords to every enemy of liberty, whether civil or religious, throughout the world.



We request you to put this question to your own minds—Is there another country in the world, where, for conscience sake, several of the most ancient Nobles of the land are deprived of their hereditary privileges? Where hundreds of Gentlemen, possessors of ancient and large landed estates, are deprived of honours and rights, the usual attendants on birth and property? Where the industry of the Merchant, and the talent of the Lawyer, are checked in the midst of their respective careers? Where six or seven millions of the people are deprived of the benefit of equal chances under equal laws? And, as a proof of the direful, but natural effects of such a system of law, we implore you to look at Ireland—that island of genius and of fertility; behold her in all her nakedness and all her misery.

Our religion is said to be peculiarly proselyting. If to proselyte be to convince by the use of fair argument, then is ours a proselyting religion. As Englishmen, we claim the right of free discussion; and should be ashamed to call ourselves your fellow subjects, could we forego this valuable privilege. But if to proselyte be to substitute force for argument, and to give premiums for apostacy and hypocrisy, such proselytism is a disgrace to any form of Christianity, and we solemnly abjure it. We entreat you to endeavour to divest your minds of preconceived impressions to our disadvantage, and calmly to examine the situa-

tion in which we stand. In a country boasting of peculiar liberality, we suffer severe privations because we differ from you in religious belief. The remaining penalties—neither few nor trivial—of a penal code of unparalleled severity, still press upon us; a Catholic Peer cannot sit and vote in the House of Peers, and is thus deprived of his most valuable birthright; a Catholic Commoner cannot sit and vote in the House of Commons; a Catholic Freeholder may be prevented from voting at Elections for Members; a Catholic cannot sit in the Privy Council, or be a Minister of the Crown; he cannot be a Judge, or hold any Crown office in any of the Spiritual, Equity, or Common Law Courts; he may practise at the Bar, but he cannot become a King's Counsel; he cannot hold any office in any of the Corporations; he cannot graduate at either of the two Universities, much less enjoy any of the numerous beneficial offices connected with them, although both of those seats of learning were founded by Catholics; he cannot marry either a Protestant or a Catholic, unless the ceremony be performed by a Protestant Clergyman; he cannot settle real or personal property for the use of his church, or of Catholic schools, or for any other purposes of the Catholic religion; he cannot vote at Vestries, or present to a living in the Church, though both of those rights seem to appertain to the enjoyment of property, and may actually be exercised by infidels.



Such are our principal grievances ; but more than all we complain of the galling brand of disgrace which is the consequence of these disqualifications, and which is more intolerable to honourable minds, than the severest pressure of penal infliction ; and necessarily implies guilt on our part, or injustice upon yours.

From early youth, to the last stage of existence, we are doomed to bear about us a painful feeling of inferiority, and of undeserved reproach. It is to us no matter of surprise, that tales, which malevolence invented in troubled times, which party zeal propagated, and which, in many instances, were sanctioned by the forms, though not by the reality of justice, should be perpetuated even to this hour ; and that a general mass of prejudice should have been created, requiring centuries to remove. The infant is taught, with his first accents, to impugn our Faith ; his education matures his early impressions, and he remains through life the creature of prejudice. Persons possessed of the most honourable feelings, and incapable of sanctioning injustice or deceit, are thus drawn in to become our opponents. We beseech all such attentively to investigate, before they finally condemn. We invite all to the cool consideration of our principles ; because we know that they will bear the test of the closest inquiry. If there be persons who barter principle for place, trade in our degradation, and encourage prejudices which they despise,—if



such there be, they are not more *our* enemies than *yours*; and be it our mutual task to unveil them, that Religion, the child of heaven, may nor be disfigured by human passions, nor infidelity find an ally in our want of charity to each other.

Bearing equally with you our fellow subjects, the burthens of the country, and upholding equally its institutions, and its glory, we claim to be admitted to a full participation in all the rights of British subjects.—Every principle or practice hostile, in the remotest degree, to those institutions, we most explicitly disclaim. Year after year we repeat the humiliating task of disavowal; still we suffer the penalties of guilt. We ask you is this to endure for ever? Are we always to remain the victims of misplaced suspicion? The doors of the Constitution are shut against us, as long as we continue true to the dictates of our consciences; but if we abandon the Faith of our fathers, resign every honourable feeling, and become perjured men and apostates, then are all our disqualifications removed; the sanctuary of the British Constitution is thrown open to us; we become senators, privy-counsellors, nay, guardians of the morals of the people, and dispensers of public justice! God forbid we should purchase such distinctions, however valuable, at the price of dishonour. In the hour of danger, when our country needs it, we mingle our blood with yours. We desire no ascendancy,

religious (7) or political. If our country falls, we ask to fall with her; if she prospers, we claim to share her prosperity.

The above Address was read and adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the British Catholic Association, held on the 1st of June, 1826.

NORFOLK, E. M.	MICHAEL JONES.
SURREY.	WM. WITHAM.
SHREWSBURY.	JUSTIN FITZGERALD.
KINNAIRD.	JOHN STANTON.
STOURTON.	JOSEPH IRELAND.
PETRE.	CHARLES COURTENAY.
STAFFORD.	JOSEPH BERINGTON.
CLIFFORD.	ROBERT THROCKMORTON.
CHARLES STOURTON.	JOHN GAGE.
H. V. JERNINGHAM.	JOSEPH FRANCIS TEMPEST.
HUGH CHAS. CLIFFORD.	THOMAS STAPLETON, JUN.
E. M. VAVASOUR.	CHARLES BUTLER.
CHARLES LANGDALE.	CHARLES EYSTON.
PHILIP STOURTON.	WM. BLOUNT.
EDWARD PETRE.	EDWARD DOUGHTY.
CHARLES CLIFFORD.	RALPH RIDDELL.
WM. GERARD, Bart.	EDW. WIDDRINGTON RIDDELL.
HY. JOS. TICHBORNE, Bart.	THOMAS RIDDELL.
GEO. THROCKMORTON, Bart.	CHARLES CONOLLY.
EDWARD BLOUNT, Bart.	HENRY ROBINSON, JUN.
HENRY WEBB, Bart.	WM. PLOWDEN.
RICHARD BEDINGFELD, Bart.	GEORGE SILVERTOP.
EDWARD SMYTHE, Bart.	HENRY ENGLEFIELD.
CLIFFORD CONSTABLE, Bart.	MARLOW SIDNEY.
FRANCIS CHOLMELY.	PEREGRINE EDW. TOWNELEY.
HENRY HOWARD, OF CORBY.	JOHN JONES.
PHILIP HENRY HOWARD.	WILLIAM JONES.
CHARLES TEMPEST.	RICHARD HUDDLESTON.
JOHN ROSSON.	THOMAS STAPLETON.
MICHAEL JOSEPH QUIN.	CHAS. GREGORY FAIRFAX.
GEORGE MEYNELL.	ROBT. BERKELEY, JUN.
W. K. AMHERST.	JNO. CLAVERING, OF CALLALY.
CHARLES TURVILLE.	THOMAS MOLYNEUX SEEL.
JOHN WRIGHT.	EDWARD BLOUNT.

(7) Declaration of the Catholic Bishops in Great Britain, sect. 9.

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